

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
Personal Identity Part II

Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Please respond to them thoughtfully and thoroughly in order to receive full homework credit.

Part One

1. Arnold tells Gordy that Rowdy hates him because he left the rez. As Gordy points out, Arnold still lives on the reservation and just goes to school in Reardan. Arnold responds, "I know, I know, but some Indians think you have to act white to make your life better. Some Indians think you *become* white if you try to make your life better, if you become successful" (131). Later on, Arnold tells Gordy that some people on the reservation call him an apple because "they think [he's] red on the outside and white on the inside" (132).

Arnold also says, "Well, okay, Gordy was white, but anybody can start to act like an Indian if he hangs around us long enough" (131).

- a. What does it mean for Arnold to "act white"?
- b. What might it mean to be white on the inside? Is that somehow different than "acting white"?
- c. Does acting like an Indian (or a white person) make one *become* Indian (or white)?

Part Two

2. Reread Arnold's list of all the tribes to which he belongs (217).
 - a. Which of those tribes are ones that Arnold chose?
 - b. Which of those tribes are ones that Arnold *did not* choose?
 - c. Based on this list, is one's identity something one gets to choose, or is it something that is given to a person?